

QUARTERLY NARRATIVE REPORT - October 1, 1980-December 31, 1980

Summary of Project Progress

- a) Program Objective: Provide short-term services to 100 new client families during the year and to 25 clients for this quarter.

From October 1, 1980 to December 31, 1980, our staff provided 31 new families of inmates with short term services. Since this quarter begins a new project year, we will be recording all data from a zero base as of this point.

We consider a short term service as one which can be provided to a family within a two week period. The service might be arranging transportation to an institution for a family, short term crisis intervention, immediate referral services, providing emergency food, clothing, shelter, etc.

As is the case with many social service agencies, we receive an increase in referrals during the months of November and December. Requests include food baskets for Thanksgiving and Christmas and toys for children of inmates. We also find a dramatic increase in calls for assistance with emergency housing, food and clothing because the incidence of fires and families being burned out increase. Many clients at this time of the year also experience problems with heat and the inability to pay rising fuel costs.

This year in order to help our clients efficiently, we began making arrangements early in the quarter in anticipation of emergency needs. Both the Salvation Army and the Urban League agreed to serve our client population with food baskets for both of the major holidays.

Arrangements were also made with Ayuda, a Rahway State Prison inmate group which conducts an annual toy drive for children of inmates. This year our agency officially became a beneficiary of the toy drive. Thus, in December we picked up 100 toys from the prison and began an early distribution process to our clients. Every family that applied to us for toys received gifts appropriate to age and sex.

- b) Program Objective: Provide medium term services to 60 client families during the year and to 15 families for this quarter.

From October 1, 1980 to December 31, 1980, our staff provided 19 new families of inmates with medium term services.

A medium term service is one which requires two weeks to two months to provide to a family. Such services can include casework, professional task-oriented counselling, employment or educational counselling, etc. Often the major difference between short and medium term services is the amount of time it takes to stabilize a family.

In October we received an emergency referral from a correctional officer of the Essex County Jail Women's wing. Mrs. A, an inmate, had made arrangements with a friend of

hers, Miss C, to care for her child while remaining in Mrs. A's apartment. There was a major fire in the building causing the city of East Orange to condemn the structure. All occupants were evacuated. This left Miss C highly upset and unable to relocate because of a lack of available funds. Our staff immediately made arrangements with welfare for her to begin receiving funds and clothing for the child. We also helped her to obtain emergency relocation funds and find an apartment. Through this entire ordeal our staff counselled and calmed a frightened child and two overwhelmed women, Mrs. A and Miss C. Separation from one's children is a difficult thing at best. Mrs. A's case was compounded because of the difficulties she knew her daughter was facing and her total inability to help.

- c) Program Objective: Provide long term services to 40 client families for the year and ten for this quarter.

From October 1, 1980 to December 31, 1980, our staff provided 5 new families of inmates with long term services. The total number of new families (short, medium and long term cases) served this quarter was 55.

A long term service is one which usually takes between two months to a year to provide. Many of our long term family cases become inactive for a period and then active again as these families become enmeshed in new crises.

This quarter we saw one of our long term cases come to a successful completion. We held a warm celebration with Mr. M and his parents. Mr. M's father arrived at our office one day last February highly distraught. His 44 year old son had just been arrested for the first time in his life. The charge was burglary. Neither Mr. M or his father had the slightest idea who to contact for legal services, whether or not to inform his employer, what to tell his wife and children, how to cope with the bail system and so on.

For eleven months we worked with Mr. M, his parents and his wife and children. We worked with his public defender and ultimately testified on behalf of Mr. M in court. The intimacy which we developed with Mr. M and his family helped us to provide competent counselling as well as competent testimony. Mr. M is currently working and maintaining his financial responsibilities at home. For the next three months he will return to Caldwell Correctional Center at night as a part of his arrangement with the court. For most of us on the staff work with our long term cases is often the most gratifying. It is in these cases that we have the opportunity to develop a depth that is not possible in shorter range cases.

- d) Program Objective: Maintain contact with criminal justice system personnel.

On December 4th, the American Friends Service Committee and Justice The Helping Hand co-hosted the New Jersey State Parole Board at a community conference. The conference held at Newark House, was attended by over 100 people interested in hearing about the recent parole legislation. The audience was composed of family members of inmates, Department of Corrections personnel, staff of criminal justice and Social service agencies and students.

Prior to December 4th, we collected questions that people had concerning parole and submitted them to the Parole Board. Many of these issues were dealt with by the Parole Board, who also answered questions from the floor. The Parole Board has also graciously agreed to answer all questions in writing. Upon receipt of their answers, we will once again publish a pamphlet which will be distributed to family members and interested professionals.

As we are now preparing to expand our work into Union County, contacts with Union County jail personnel and social service agencies have greatly increased. We also anticipate developing the same kind of rapport with Union County judges and public defenders that we have in Essex County. As our services to Union County will officially begin in January, we are in the process of preparing announcement flyers for distribution in the jail there, as well as media releases.

On December 30th, our staff was invited to speak about the Justice Program and our work in the county jails before the Rotary Club of Newark. Staff members also spoke at Kean College and Essex County Detention Center this quarter. It is a rare speaking engagement that doesn't result in a case or a referral.

- e) Program Objective: Provide peer group support for families by providing a self help group.

Justice The Helping Hand continues its growth and outreach. Along with continuing efforts to raise funds for the Bail Bond Fund, the group is now reaching for tax-exempt status.

Members have also decided on an educational outreach effort in order to create in themselves an intelligent understanding of larger criminal justice issues. In October, JTHH had a guest speaker, David Mintz, Director of the National Council On Crime and Delinquency, who talked about the Bond issue to an overflow audience. In November, members of another self-help group called CHAIN spoke to the group on ways local communities can aid the severely understaffed Newark Police Department. December, of course, was the community conference on Parole.

It remains a unique process that "clients" come into the program for assistance and some months later become participants, members, and/or volunteers working toward larger, common goals. JTHH is now planning for several events in the Spring including elections and installation of new officers, another ecumenical gathering at Caldwell, participation on a Rahway State Prison Visitors Advisory Board and a Spring conference on Alternatives to Incarceration.

- f) Program Objective: Develop a Services Resource Bank

Because of the extension of our work into Union County, work is well underway for this additional component to our Essex County Bank. We anticipate a continued growing use of our bank by other social service and criminal justice agencies.

FAMILY STABILIZATION PROJECT  
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## REPORT ON PROJECT ACTIVITIES

January 2, 1981 - January 31, 1981

*This report is produced by the American Friends Service Committee to provide public officials and criminal justice system personnel with information on our current work with the families of prisoners in Essex & Union Counties Correctional facilities. For further information about any aspect of our work, please contact Wray Bailey or Bonnie Kerness at (201) 643-3079.*

From January 1, 1981 to January 31, 1981, the Family Stabilization Project provided services to 20 new client families. Nine cases were referred from Essex County Jail and three from Caldwell Correctional Center. Five additional cases were client referrals from other community agencies. Three cases were referred from Union County Jail.

Since the beginning of the Family Stabilization Project's new grant on October 1, 1980, we have provided services to 75 new client families. Forty six of these cases were referred from Essex County Jail and five from Caldwell Correctional Center. Twenty one additional cases were client self referrals or referrals from other community agencies. Three cases were referred from Union County Jail.

To date we have completed 64 cases, 32 from Essex County Jail and 21 from Caldwell. We closed 11 cases which were referrals from other agencies. We are currently working with 47 client families from previous months plus the three new client families of Union County Jail.

Since the beginning of the project's new grant on October 1, 1980, until January 31, 1981, Family Stabilization project staff have handled 31 short term cases, 19 medium term cases and 5 long term cases. Since January 1, 1981, we have opened 20 additional cases which have not yet been classified.

As of this month, we have expanded our services to include visits to Union County Jail and assistance to Union County families. As a result we are aware of several new Justice The Helping Hand members from the Union County area who are participating in meetings. We also have had the pleasure of working with two new office volunteers from the Elizabeth area, a real morale booster for our staff.

Justice The Helping Hand began its annual membership drive at its January meeting. The drive runs from January through March and has a goal of 200 paid members. At this point, staff and JTHH officers and members are busy in their efforts to meet this goal. We all want to make JTHH the largest advocacy/family group dealing with criminal justice in New Jersey, and it looks like we will make it!

The application forms and cover letter for the Community Bail Bond Project have been finalized. We are currently creating a flyer to be distributed in the jails. We should be able to complete this distribution by next month and then be able officially to begin taking applicants.

One particular client this month captured the collective heart of the staff. Although Mrs. K's husband has been incarcerated for some time now, she had only recently heard about our work. She contacted our office to get help finding an apartment for herself and her 17 month old son and helping to achieve independence through completing her GED, and perhaps going on to college. Mrs. K is barely 18 years old and has already coped with much in her young life. Because she and her young son have "sunshine dispositions", they quickly became a part of our office routine during the time we were helping her search for an appropriate place to live.

Mrs. K has now found an apartment with which she feels happy and safe. Her GED is forthcoming and she still plans further education for herself. Through counseling she has worked out some of her difficulties concerning her feeling overwhelmed by the responsibilities involved in the care of her young child. We have also been able to provide her incarcerated husband with the feeling that his young family is not quite so isolated as they have been in the past. A "simple" case, a young woman struggling (like so many) - and we were able to help.